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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0106  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 0031  
RUEHRK/AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE 0039  
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB IMMEDIATE 0051  
RUEHBS/NATO SUPPORT ACTIVITY BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000129

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/21/2017  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [IC](#) [AF](#) [LH](#) [DA](#) [HR](#) [UK](#) [CA](#) [NATO](#)  
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA SANGUINE ABOUT ICELANDIC PEACEKEEPER  
ROLE CHANGE

REF: STATE 18578

Classified By: ADCM RDUNHAM FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) We met with Ambassador-at-Large Gediminas Serksnys February 20 to encourage the GOL to demarche Iceland against the withdrawal of its mobile patrol team from Afghanistan at the end of April 2007. Serksnys expressed only mild disappointment at the loss of the Mobile Liaison Observation Team (MLOT). He pointed out that the Icelandic personnel would not be leaving Ghor, and neither would their equipment. The team members will merely be "changing their uniforms" and will instead work on civil reconstruction projects. Their vehicles will remain available for use by the PRT.

¶2. (C) We asked whether the loss of the specialized driving skills of the Icelandic team would pose a problem for PRT Chaghcharan. Ambassador Serksnys was hopeful that new Croatian drivers might fill this role. Ambassador Serksnys said that the Croatian contribution to the Ghor PRT is planned to reach 200 people in 2007 and 300 by 2008. Serksnys said that he had spoken with military officers on the ground who said that Icelandic drivers are very good in the difficult terrain of the region, but that they also had restrictions that sometimes meant that those capabilities could not be put to their fullest use. He also said that the Croats have experience in these types of driving conditions.

¶3. (C) According to Serksnys, the GOL focus is clearly on reconstruction projects that require civilian resources. He pointed out that much of the threat of instability right now in the region is posed by poverty, disgruntled poppy farmers, and a lack of training in the police force. He was convinced that the new work the Icelandic team would be doing was at least as important as the patrolling it has done to date. Furthermore, Serksnys estimated overall contributions from Iceland would reach \$700,000 per year, about half the sum Lithuania itself provides.

¶4. (SBU) On a separate note, Serksnys told us he was happy with the announcement that the EU would be sending police officers to help train in the provinces. Serksnys said police training is a critical area on which to focus. In his general observation police officers in Afghanistan have low education levels and the only training they receive is in marching. Lithuania has already provided some training in forensic science and vehicle security checks. The GOL is currently seeking the resources to be able to provide training and equipment for a ballistic forensic science

center in the future.

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